

## Introduction

The current, digital era allows people to communicate in various ways, which do not necessarily require the presence of speakers in the same place. By means of computers, consoles, smartphones, it is in fact possible to interact and have a say from different cities, countries, or nations. What is more, the technological development is providing innovative applications to favour interlingual communication, by means of real-time translation software. From a general perspective, though, due to the technological and political development of English-speaking countries, English is still the favourite channel for international and cross-cultural communication, and its importance in this sense is confirmed by its status as the language that allows human beings to overcome their linguistic and cultural differences.

In particular, when English is used in cross-cultural interactions, it is defined as a Lingua Franca, identifying the linguistic choice enabling communication between speakers from different linguacultural backgrounds. The research area going under the label of “English as a Lingua Franca” (ELF) investigates the several dimensions of cross-cultural interactions, from the linguistic, to the communicative ones (cf. Jenkins 2000, 2007; Seidlhofer 2011; Guido and Seidlhofer 2014). Several research issues are addressed, from how English is constructed, modified, adapted, to the analyses of how the non-native speakers’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence the features of their lingua-franca variations. It follows that several types of ELF are identified, according to the different speakers, to different political and economic factors, and to the status asymmetries between senders and recipients.

This book aims to develop the research on English lingua-franca variations by focusing on an area of investigation that is scantily explored, and by proposing an analytical method that could be applied to the earlier stages of mediators and translators’ training. This book will explore the adoption of lingua-franca variations in a selected corpus of film scripts, dealing with some scripted interactions that are not conventionally taken into account in the development of ELF studies, but which can actually offer insight into how actual exchanges are carried out, as well as into the native speakers’ cognitive expectations about the linguistic and communicative dimensions of cross-cultural interactions.

ELF scholars generally investigate cross-cultural interactions in order to examine the properties of the language employed. Their work has challenged the view of non-native speakers resorting to English as a second language (L2) acquired through education or personal experience according to the native-speaker standard norms of the English grammar, contending instead that non-native speakers’ lingua-franca variations develop from a

process of “language authentication” (Widdowson 1979), which defines the acquisition of a second or foreign language as a means for intercultural communication. According to this view, language acquisition encompasses the schema dimensions and the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic structures of the speakers’ native language (L1), which are transferred to the structures of the speakers’ respective ELF variations (Guido and Seidlhofer 2014: 10). ELF variations are therefore not to be considered as defective English uses, but it is also true that the distance between the participants’ linguacultural backgrounds once transferred to ELF may trigger miscommunication or misinterpretation (cf. Guido 2008).

Furthermore, ELF scholars reveal that native and non-native speakers have specific roles in allowing successful communication. For example, non-native speakers can be seen as creative contributors pursuing the “fullest communication possible” (Seidlhofer 2011: 18-19), thus justifying the differences from the standard norms. On the other hand, native speakers are expected to show a peculiar attitude according to which the cooperative imperative prevails over the territorial one (Widdowson 1983). The definition of the participants’ main roles entails that achieving a successful conveyance of the speakers’ intentionality is more important than notifying and correcting misspellings or mispronunciations, which may pass unnoticed (Mauranen 2012) along with the lexical and syntactic deviations. As a result, native and non-native speakers are members of discourse communities sharing a common communicative purpose (Swales 1990; Seidlhofer 2011: 87), along with the illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects (Austin 1962), which are made accessible to receivers by means of accommodation and meaning-negotiation strategies (Jenkins 2000; Cogo and Dewey 2006; Mauranen 2007). Depending on the contexts, though, the cooperative imperative may not be predominant, and in fact Guido (2008) illustrates that in exchanges occurring in specific socio-cultural and political scenarios, such as those connected to migrations, participants can play a high or a low status. The latter type of speakers’ behaviour is important also in terms of the text types that will be analysed here, which mostly represent asymmetrical interactions, in the course of which the high-status participants aim to prevail.

Research on ELF variations covers a number of specific communicative contexts, passing from education (Mauranen 2012; Gotti 2014), to cross-cultural unequal encounters (Guido 2008) and computer-mediated business interactions (Poppi 2014). At the same time, audiovisual communication and translation are dimensions not thoroughly explored. For this reason, this book will enquire into the possibility of creating a contact between the studies on lingua-franca variations and the production and translation of film scripts, developing the earlier contributions that explore the rendering into dubbing and subtitles of the ELF cues from a group of films labelled as “migration movies” (Iaia and Sperti 2013; Iaia, Provenzano,

and Sperti forthcoming), which display the life conditions and issues of migrant workers and families in foreign countries.

A multidisciplinary perspective will be adopted, aiming at an interaction between ELF studies and audiovisual translation, which would contribute to both research areas insofar as it favours the exploration of the lingua-franca variations employed in scripted exchanges in both source and target audiovisual texts, as well as the investigation of the actual linguistic and communicative features used for the construction of film conversations.

Hence, after presenting the processes of film construction and translation as communicative acts, exploring the influence of the functional, socio-cultural and cognitive dimensions in the production and rendering of source scripts (Chapter 1), the topic of English as a lingua franca will be enquired into (Chapter 2). The linguistic and schematic notions connected to the cross-cultural interactions will be defined, eventually determining the main lexical, structural and pragmatic features of the scripted linguistic variations in the selected corpus of films. Then, the description of the selected “migration movies” (Chapter 3) will be followed by the analyses of the scripts (Chapters 4-9), which will detail how the linguistic dimensions may help to define the status asymmetries. The analyses shall also illustrate the structures of some relevant interactions, which will be characterised by the identification of new moves that are meant to exemplify the socio-cultural influence in the asymmetrical dialogues under analysis. Finally, the source and target versions will be compared, to enquire into the translators’ interpretation and rendering of the original illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects.

